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REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON THE UNITED NATIONS OBSERVER MISSION IN LIBERIA

INTRODUCTION

1. The present report is submitted in response to Security Council resolution 866 (1993), adopted on 22 September 1993, by which the Security Council authorized the establishment of the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL) for a period of seven months, in accordance with the timetable foreseen in the Peace Agreement signed in Cotonou by the three parties to the conflict in Liberia on 25 July 1993. In establishing UNOMIL the Security Council stipulated that the mission would continue beyond 16 December 1993 only upon a review by the Council based on a report from the Secretary-General on whether or not substantive progress had been made towards the implementation of the Peace Agreement and other measures aimed at establishing a lasting peace. In paragraph 13 of resolution 866 (1993) the Security Council further requested me, in particular, to report by 16 December 1993 on the progress made in the implementation of the UNOMIL mandate.

2. The Peace Agreement assigns to the Military Observer Group (ECOMOG) established in Liberia in 1990 by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the primary responsibility for ensuring the implementation of its provisions and calls upon the United Nations to monitor the various implementation procedures in order to verify their impartial application.

3. In concluding the Cotonou Agreement, the three Liberian parties, namely, the Interim Government of National Unity (IGNU), the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL/NPRAG) and the United Liberation Movement for Democracy in Liberia (ULIMO), agreed to observe the cease-fire, with effect from 1 August 1993. They also agreed to implement the political and military provisions of the Agreement, including disarmament and demobilization, the repatriation of refugees and the holding of free and fair elections within seven months of the signature of the Agreement, that is, by February/March 1994. The parties further undertook to unify the country under a Liberia National Transitional Government, which would be established concomitant with the commencement of disarmament. In addition, the parties agreed that, as a precondition to the start of disarmament and demobilization, the ECOMOG force would be expanded by troops from member States of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) outside the West African region.

4. In accordance with resolution 866 (1993), UNOMIL would be comprised of 303 military observers, 20 military medical personnel and 45 military engineering personnel, as well as humanitarian and electoral components. Its military tasks are to: investigate all reports on alleged incidents of violations of the cease-fire agreement; monitor compliance with other elements of the Peace Agreement, including at points on Liberia's borders, and, in particular, assist in the monitoring of compliance with the embargo on delivery of arms and military equipment to Liberia, and monitor the cantonment, disarmament and demobilization of combatants. In addition, UNOMIL is required to observe and verify the election process; assist in the coordination of humanitarian assistance; develop a plan and assess financial requirements for demobilization; report on any major violations of international humanitarian law; train ECOMOG engineers in mine clearance and, in cooperation with ECOMOG, coordinate the identification and clearance of land mines and unexploded bombs and coordinate with ECOMOG in the discharge of its separate responsibilities.

I. POLITICAL ASPECTS

5. The Peace Agreement stipulated that there should be a single Liberia National Transitional Government the mandate of which is to provide essential government services during the transitional period and to also hold and supervise general and presidential elections. The transitional government would have three branches: legislative, executive and judicial. Executive authority would be invested in a five-member Council of State. The composition of these organs of state would include all of the parties signatory to the Agreement, so as to emphasize the inclusionary character of the transitional period. The transitional government was to be installed in Monrovia approximately 30 days from the date of signature of the Peace Agreement, concomitant with the commencement of disarmament. Upon the installation of the transitional government, both the Interim Government of National Unity (IGNU) and the National Patriotic Reconstruction Assembly Government (NPRAG), the governing arm of the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL), would cease to exist.

6. On 17 August 1993, following consultations between the Liberian parties, the five members of the Council of State were selected and its Chairperson and two Vice-Chairpersons chosen. The swearing in of the Council has yet to take place as it awaits the beginning of disarmament.

7. The Chairman of ECOWAS, President Nicéphore Dieudonné Soglo of Benin, arranged for further consultations among the parties at a meeting in Cotonou from 3 to 5 November 1993. At this meeting the parties agreed on the distribution between them of 13 out of a total of 17 cabinet posts. Further talks among the parties on the remaining 4 ministerial portfolios, i.e. defence, foreign affairs, finance and justice, as well as other issues related to the installation of the transitional government, are continuing. The parties have also reached agreement on the composition of the Elections Commission, on the Speaker of the Legislature and the members of the Supreme Court.

8. The emergence of a new group in the south-east, the Liberia Peace Council, and the reported formation of another group in Upper Lofa, the Liberia Defense Force, have complicated the political scene. These groups, which are not signatories to the Cotonou Peace Agreement, have engaged in skirmishes in those areas of the country.

9. In adopting resolution 866 (1993), the Security Council welcomed my intention to conclude with the Chairman of ECOWAS, prior to the full deployment of UNOMIL, an agreement defining the respective roles and responsibilities of UNOMIL and ECOWAS in the implementation of the Peace Agreement, in accordance with the concept of operations outlined in chapter IV of my report of 9 September 1993 (S/26422). On the basis of the informal consultations between ECOWAS and my Special Representative, Mr. Trevor Gordon-Somers, I addressed to President Soglo of Benin, Chairman of ECOWAS, on 7 October 1993, a letter outlining the roles and responsibilities to be entrusted to UNOMIL and ECOMOG, in accordance with the concept of operations outlined in my previous report to the Council (S/26422). In a communication dated 11 November 1993, the Chairman of ECOWAS confirmed his agreement with the content of my letter. Accordingly, on 23 November 1993, I informed the President of the Security Council that this exchange of letters constituted the agreement between the United Nations and ECOWAS.

10. My Special Representative consults regularly with the parties to the Agreement, travelling throughout Liberia as required, as well as with ECOMOG, ECOWAS, representatives of OAU and States Members of the United Nations interested in the implementation of the Peace Agreement, particularly in regard to the commencement of disarmament of the Liberian parties and the deployment of the expanded ECOMOG troops. The single most important factor holding up the implementation of the Peace Agreement has been the delay in the deployment of the expanded ECOMOG. It is my hope that the discussions which my Special Representative has been conducting with the parties, ECOWAS and interested Member States will result in the initiation of disarmament in the near future. This is discussed further in the relevant sections below.

II. MILITARY ASPECTS

A. General

11. On 10 August 1993, with the adoption of resolution 856 (1993), the Security Council authorized the deployment of an advance party of 30 United Nations military observers to Liberia in order to assist in the monitoring and verification of the cease-fire prior to the full establishment of UNOMIL. The advance party began arriving in Liberia immediately thereafter and all 30 military observers arrived in the country by mid-September.

12. The Liberian parties had concurred, under the Peace Agreement, that in order to monitor and ensure against any violation of the cease-fire between the period of its coming into force on 1 August 1993 and the arrival of the additional ECOMOG troops, and the full contingent of United Nations military observers, a Joint Cease-fire Monitoring Committee would be established in order to monitor, investigate and report all cease-fire violations. The Committee is

composed of representatives of the Liberian parties and ECOMOG and chaired by the United Nations. Upon full deployment of ECOMOG and UNOMIL, the Committee will be replaced by a Violations Committee. In accordance with the Peace Agreement, on 13 August 1993, the United Nations chaired the first meeting of the Joint Cease-fire Monitoring Committee. To date, the Committee has successfully investigated and resolved 59 out of 99 alleged cease-fire violations and has been an important confidence-building instrument among the parties. Of the remaining 40 cease-fire violations, investigations have been carried out on 25 of the violations and an additional 15 are still pending.

13. In accordance with the Peace Agreement, the Joint Cease-fire Monitoring Committee teams are expected to travel freely throughout Liberia in order to monitor and investigate reports of cease-fire violations. They are also to be deployed at border crossings and ports of entry. At present, permanent monitoring teams have been deployed at Vahun in Upper Lofa, on the border with Sierra Leone; at Loguato, on the border with Côte d'Ivoire, and in Kakata and Buchanan (see map in the annex to the present report). The teams also patrol the front line from Kakata through Harbel along the highway to Buchanan. In addition, a monitoring team also accompanied the train carrying humanitarian assistance from Buchanan to Yekepa, in territory under NPFL/NPRAG control. Agreement has also been reached on the deployment of two teams at the Spriggs-Payne airport and the Freeport in Monrovia. These teams regularly patrol their areas of responsibility and undertake investigations of alleged cease-fire violations.

14. Initially, the Joint Cease-fire Monitoring Committee faced logistical and administrative difficulties, as well as the effects of distrust among the parties. While all the parties encountered difficulties in meeting their obligations to attend Committee meetings and to facilitate its work in their areas of control, NPFL/NPRAG was most constrained in meeting its obligations, owing to shortages of fuel and other vitally needed supplies not readily available in areas under their control. Furthermore, the Committee has not been able to establish permanent bases at Tow Town in Grand Gedeh County, Greenville in Sinoe County, Harper in Maryland County, or to enter the south-east to investigate the activities of the Liberia Peace Council (LPC), owing to objections from NPFL/NPRAG on security grounds. Similarly, ULIMO has not permitted the establishment of a Monitoring Committee base at Zorzor in Upper Lofa County. It is my understanding, however, that on the basis of recent discussions with my Special Representative and my Chief Military Observer, all parties are now willing to allow the deployment of United Nations military observers in their areas of control. It is expected that UNOMIL will soon be able to have freedom of movement throughout the country.

15. The Chief Military Observer, Major-General Daniel Ishmael Opande from Kenya, arrived in the country on 10 October 1993. There are at present 166 UNOMIL military personnel in Liberia from 13 contributing countries. Additional military observers are being deployed. Logistic difficulties have been encountered in deploying military observers and in ensuring that transportation and communications equipment are purchased and sent to Liberia in a timely manner. Despite these difficulties, it is expected that by the end of December, full deployment of the total authorized strength of 368 military

personnel (including 20 medical and 45 engineering personnel) will have been completed.

16. In addition to regular patrolling and cease-fire monitoring through the Joint Cease-fire Monitoring Committee, United Nations military observers have been conducting reconnaissance missions in cooperation with the parties and ECOMOG in many areas of Liberia in preparation for their deployment to these areas and in preparation for disarmament and demobilization. The military observers have also been engaged in the establishment of regional headquarters and the transportation and communication units, in accordance with the UNOMIL concept of operations described in my report of 9 September 1993 (S/24622).

B. Disarmament and demobilization

17. Under resolution 866 (1993), the Security Council mandated UNOMIL to prepare a plan and to assess the financial needs of disarmament and demobilization. I am pleased to report that the planning and preparation for disarmament and demobilization which has been undertaken in consultation with the Liberian parties, ECOMOG, United Nations specialized agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), are well under way. Ten cantonment centres have been identified, although physical inspection for site preparation has been possible only in a limited number of these locations. Three of these cantonment centres are being prepared to receive combatants as soon as disarmament begins. Workshops have been organized throughout the country to urge community leaders to reintegrate ex-combatants. A public information campaign has also been launched focusing on cartoons and radio programmes outlining the need for disarmament in order to consolidate the peace process.

18. It was originally foreseen that the costs of disarmament and demobilization would be met by the Trust Fund for Liberia. However, as of today, no pledges have been made to the Trust Fund for this purpose. Since disarmament and demobilization are essential for the establishment of the transitional government, the holding of free and fair elections and, therefore, to the successful implementation of the entire peace process, I have included in the UNOMIL budget an amount of approximately $5 million to cover only the immediate short-term needs of disarmament and demobilization. This would enable approximately 54,000 adult combatants and 6,000 child soldiers to give up their arms and return to their homes. Should contributions for disarmament and demobilization be made to the Trust Fund, the UNOMIL budget would be reimbursed by such contributions. It is anticipated that the other aspects of demobilization, including training and other reintegration programmes to help the ex-combatants build sustainable new lives, will be included in the inter-agency appeal for humanitarian assistance to Liberia, which I expect to issue this month.

19. Planning for disarmament and demobilization has been impeded by the failure of the parties to provide vitally needed information on the number and location of their combatants, weapons, and mines. This information is needed for the preparation of schedules for implementation. Although, in accordance with the Peace Agreement, the commencement of disarmament is linked to the expansion of ECOMOG, in my previous report on Liberia to the Security Council (S/26422), I

called upon the parties to exercise greater flexibility in accelerating disarmament. In this connection, it should be recalled that ULIMO has consistently offered to disarm to ECOMOG as constituted. NPFL/NPRAG has, in more recent pronouncements, expressed a willingness to commence voluntary disarmament to United Nations military observers, accompanied by calls for the immediate installation of the transitional government. This proposal is being carefully examined since it would entail a revision of the UNOMIL mandate. Should the deployment of additional ECOMOG troops be further delayed, I would then present the appropriate recommendations to the Security Council in this regard. I am concerned, however, at reports which indicate that the Armed Forces of Liberia, the military arm of IGNU, is attempting to link disarmament to pensionable arrangements. My Special Representative is continuing his dialogue with the Armed Forces of Liberia and IGNU to ensure that the Armed Forces of Liberia disarm in accordance with the Peace Agreement.

C. The expanded ECOMOG force

20. Throughout negotiations in Geneva and in Cotonou in July 1993, the expansion of ECOMOG was viewed as a crucial prerequisite for progress towards a lasting peace in Liberia. As I indicated to the Security Council in my report of 9 September, the Chairman of ECOWAS has informed me that ECOMOG would require financial assistance for the deployment of the additional ECOMOG troops. With the adoption of resolution 866 (1993), the Security Council welcomed the steps I had taken to establish a Trust Fund, under which Member States could make voluntary contributions to facilitate the reinforcements by African States from outside the West African region to ECOMOG, assist in supporting troops of participating ECOMOG countries and also assist in mine-clearance, humanitarian and development activities, as well as the electoral process. I am pleased to report that, on 30 September 1993, the United States pledged $19.83 million to the Trust Fund, exclusively to meet the cost of deployment, equipment and maintenance needs of the expanded ECOMOG troops.

21. During the month of October, my Special Representative led a joint UNOMIL/ECOMOG reconnaissance mission to potential contributing countries to the expanded ECOMOG. As a result of discussions held during this mission, the United Republic of Tanzania, Uganda and Zimbabwe agreed to contribute a battalion each to the expanded ECOMOG. These three additional battalions are deemed sufficient to enable ECOMOG to carry out its responsibilities under the Cotonou Peace Agreement. During the month of November, these three countries sent reconnaissance missions to Liberia to examine the needs of their troops on the ground. On the basis of these reconnaissance missions and further discussions with ECOMOG, and in accordance with the Terms of Reference of the United Nations Trust Fund for Liberia, a budget estimate covering the deployment, maintenance and equipment requirements of the three battalions for a six-month period has been developed. On this basis, it is my hope that the additional ECOMOG troops will soon be deployed to Liberia, thus enabling the disarmament and demobilization to commence immediately.

III. HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

22. In accordance with the Peace Agreement, all three parties have committed themselves to ensuring that humanitarian assistance reaches all Liberians through the most direct routes, in compliance with inspection arrangements consistent with economic sanctions and the military embargo. Similarly, Security Council resolution 866 (1993) mandated UNOMIL, inter alia, to assist in coordinating humanitarian activities in conjunction with the existing United Nations humanitarian relief operation. Recent efforts to improve coordination mechanisms between the United Nations and the NGO community are already yielding positive results. Humanitarian relief is distributed according to the criteria of need. In view of massive population displacements within Liberia and across its borders, which resulted from the conflict, the quantities of food distributed to areas under the control of the various factions have always been a source of contention.

23. At times, security problems and logistical constraints disrupt and delay the delivery of assistance. Despite this, food and other essential assistance are reaching the most vulnerable groups either across what was the front line, or cross-border through Côte d'Ivoire and, in the case of Upper Lofa, where road conditions proved insurmountable, by airdrop. However, there remain shortfalls in the quantities of essential assistance delivered. These shortfalls are being addressed and the acute malnutrition of August is being reversed in almost all areas. Insecurity in some isolated areas such as Voinjama in Upper Lofa and the south-east has left some communities in dire circumstances.

24. The Cotonou Peace Agreement calls on the parties to adopt a policy which will create conditions to facilitate repatriation of refugees. In committing to this, the parties in turn invited the United Nations, particularly the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and NGOs, to support programmes of voluntary repatriation. In planning for repatriation, UNHCR convened a regional meeting in October 1993, to assess requirements and needs for establishing transit and reception centres in order to ensure speedy and orderly repatriation. UNHCR estimates that approximately 60 per cent of the 700,000 refugees will return to Liberia once there are clear signals that peace has been restored. UNHCR has launched an appeal for the resources to facilitate repatriation.

25. I am pleased to note the contribution of $1 million to the Liberia Trust Fund by the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, specifically to help meet the humanitarian assistance needs in Liberia.

IV. ELECTIONS

26. The Cotonou Peace Agreement provides for the holding of general and presidential elections in approximately seven months from the signature of the Accord, that is, in February/March 1994. The United Nations and the International Foundation for Election System (IFES) undertook a joint mission to Liberia in October 1993 to assess the requirements for holding elections and to evaluate the probability of maintaining the timetable set out in the Agreement. The mission concluded that this timetable was optimistic but that elections

could possibly be held by May, on the assumption that disarmament and demobilization, installation of the transitional government and unification of the country were achieved expeditiously. The mission pointed out, however, that the transitional government will require financial assistance in order to hold the elections.

V. HUMAN RIGHTS

27. Abuses of basic human rights have characterized the civil war in Liberia. In May of this year, some 500 civilians were killed in Harbel. On 17 September 1993, I informed the Security Council of the findings of the Panel of Inquiry which I had appointed to investigate the Harbel massacre. In my letter of 17 November to the President of the Security Council, I informed the Security Council of the actions I had taken in response to the recommendations of the Panel.

28. Several other examples of human rights abuses have been recorded throughout the Liberian civil war. With the adoption of resolution 866 (1993), in particular paragraph 3 (f), the Security Council mandated UNOMIL to report to me on any major violations of international humanitarian law. Most recently, UNOMIL has received reports of alleged killings in Upper Lofa resulting from ethnic animosities. These matters have prompted my Special Representative to consult the United Nations Centre for Human Rights with a view to including a Human Rights Officer on his team in Monrovia.

VI. FINANCIAL ASPECTS

29. The total cost of UNOMIL for the period of its mandate, 22 September 1993 through 21 April 1994, including the costs related to the technical survey mission of August 1993 and the advance party of 30 military observers, authorized by the Security Council with the adoption of resolution 856 (1993) on 10 August 1993, has been estimated at $43,509,200 as indicated in my report of 19 November 1993 on the financing of UNOMIL (A/48/592). This includes the amount of $3.3 million, which the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) authorized on 20 September 1993 to meet costs of the advance party. It is my hope that the General Assembly will take prompt action to approve the budget of UNOMIL so as to avoid delays in the implementation of the UNOMIL mandate. The current civilian strength of the mission includes 32 international staff and 44 locally recruited staff.

VII. CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS

30. As I noted in my previous report on Liberia to the Security Council (S/26422), UNOMIL is the first peace-keeping operation undertaken by the United Nations in cooperation with a peace-keeping mission already set up by another organization, in this case a subregional organization. The implementation of the Cotonou Peace Agreement is dependent not only on the ability of UNOMIL and ECOMOG to meet their obligations as outlined in the Agreement, but also on the deployment of additional ECOMOG peace-keeping troops from three new troop-

contributing countries, as well as financial support from yet another source for the additional troops.

31. In addition to these complex implementation arrangements, the Agreement calls for what is considered to be an ambitious timetable for its implementation. In terms of the Agreement, disarmament would have begun within 30 days of its signature, concomitant with the establishment of the transitional government, that is, by the end of August 1993. From the beginning of the peace process in Liberia, all parties have been aware that the timetable was highly ambitious, especially given the complexities in establishing the joint UNOMIL/ECOMOG peace-keeping mission, including the deployment of additional ECOMOG troops. However, there is every indication that disarmament will begin shortly and that the transitional government will soon be established. In my next report to the Security Council, I expect to be able to provide more precise information on the timetable for elections, which the transitional government should be able to hold during the first half of 1994.

32. In spite of delays in the implementation of the Agreement, there have been no major violations of the cease-fire. The Liberian parties have displayed a willingness to move the peace process forward by nominating members of the Council of State and the Elections Commission, and by agreeing on the distribution of the majority of cabinet posts of the transitional government. I have learned with satisfaction from recent reports from my Special Representative that the parties are now showing more flexibility in their cooperation with UNOMIL and ECOMOG. I urge them to continue this positive approach. As I stated in my previous report to the Security Council (S/26422), the most fundamental prerequisite for the establishment and maintenance of lasting peace and stability in Liberia is that the leaders and people of Liberia should adhere to and implement faithfully the Cotonou Peace Agreement.

33. One of the hopes inspired by the signing of the Cotonou Peace Agreement was that speedy demilitarization and unification of Liberia under a single national authority would greatly enhance the delivery of humanitarian assistance and set the stage for national reconstruction. Recent reports indicate the possibility of the Liberian parties soon establishing the transitional government, which would facilitate the delivery of humanitarian assistance and further rehabilitation and reconstruction activities. I invite the international community to respond generously to the inter-agency appeal for humanitarian assistance to Liberia, which will be issued this month, so as to ensure an adequate flow of resources for the important relief and rehabilitation work that is being undertaken in Liberia.

34. In view of the considerations above, I recommend that the Security Council, in reviewing the progress made in implementing the Cotonou Peace Agreement, agree that UNOMIL should continue to implement the mandate entrusted to it under resolution 866 (1993). However, as I have already indicated, it is unlikely that the original timetable for elections will be met. Should this prove to be the case, I would bring the matter to the attention of the Security Council with appropriate recommendations.

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